

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1482

E.O. 11652: NGDS
TAGSC PEPR, GV,UR, FR,CU
SUBJECT: GUINEAN MFA VIEWS ON COMPARATIVE VALUES OF FRENCH, CUBAN
AND SOVIET PRESENCE IN AFRICA

1. IN FRANK DISCUSSION WITH MFA AFRICA SECTION CHIEF
MORIBA GABRIEL, EMBASSY OFFICER PROBED FOR GOG COMPAR-
ATIVE SENTIMENTS ON FRENCH, CUBAN AND SOVIET PRESENCES
IN AFRICA AND GOG ASSESSMENT OF CUBAN "NON-ALIGNED
STATUS". GABRIEL NOTED THAT GOG VIEW WAS SOMEWHAT SELF-
CONTRADICTIONARY AS FAR AS CUBAN "NON-ALIGNMENT" WAS CON-
CERNED. HE SAID CUBA "OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT QUALIFY" AS
NON-ALIGNED IN THE PURISTS'S SENSE. HOWEVER, IN TERMS
OF CUBA'S VALUABLE HELP TO AFRICAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,
GOG SAW CUBA AS FULFILLING THE LEGITIMATE ROLE OF A NON-
ALIGNED AID DONOR AND DESCRIBED CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN
AFRICA AS SINCERE AND ESSENTIALLY UNEXPLITATIVE. ON
THE CONTRARY, HE SAID GOG SAW FRENCH INTERVENTION IN
SHABA, THE WESTERN SAHARA AND CHAD AS AN UNAMBIGUOUS
ATTEMPT TO RESCUE ITS FORMER INFLUENCE AND ESTABLISH
COMMERCIAL MARKETS.

2. GABRIEL CHARACTERIZED SOVIET PRESENCE IN AFRICA AS
SOMEWHAT LESS DISTINCT IN TERMS OF THE DEGREE OF BENE-
FICENCE WHICH MOTIVATES IT. HE ROLLED HIS HAND BACK AND
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FORTH, PALM DOWN, WHEN ASKED IF THE GOG CONSIDERED THE
SOVIETS AS ALTRUISTICALLY MOTIVATED AS THEY CONSIDERED
THE CUBANS TO BE. HE SAID THERE WAS BROAD UNDERSTANDING
IN THE GOG THAT THE SOVIETS WERE OUT TO GET A GOOD
RETURN ON THEIR AFRICAN INVESTMENT AND ADMITTED SOVIET
INTEGRITY IN AIDING AFRICAN COUNTRIES WAS TO SOME DEGREE
SUSPECT.

3. THE THREE COMPARISONS PROVIDED SPECTRUM OF CONTRASTS AND ONE PROBABLY SHARED BY A NUMBER OF OTHER AFRICAN STATES: CUBA IS DISTINCTLY AT THE TOP, MOTIVATED BY THE CONCEPT OF ITS COMMON HERITAGE WITH AFRICA STEMMING FROM EARLIER DAYS OF COLONIALISM AND OPPRESSION. CUBA IS SEEN TO BE FIRM IN ITS COMMITMENT TO HELP AFRICANS ACHIEVE REAL INDEPENDENCE AND DEVELOP THEIR COUNTRIES AND ESSENTIALLY NOT IN SEARCH OF REWARDS SUCH AS NEW MARKETS OR AREAS OF INFLUENCE AS ARE FRANCE AND THE SUPERPOWERS. IN THE MIDDLE FALLS THE SOVIET UNION (AND PRESUMABLY THE USA, ALTHOUGH GABRIEL DID NOT SO STATE), EXPRESSING SUPERPOWER ONE-UPSMANSHIP. GOG ADMITS TO THE EXISTENCE OF SOME SOVIET SELFLESSNESS IN THE EFFORT TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICA'S MATERIAL GAIN AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT, BUT FUNDAMENTALLY GOG SEES USSR AS A SHREWD

BUSINESS PARTNER WHO IS OUT TO GET HIS POUND OF FLESH ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. (SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE WAS NOT DISCUSSED.) FRANCE IS AT THE BOTTOM, SEEN TO BE SELFISHLY REKINDLING AN OLD DREAM OF SYNTHESIZING A MODERATE BLOC OF WEST AFRICAN STATES TO STEM COMMUNISM AND OPEN PROFITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRENCH INDUSTRY. GABRIEL GAVE FRANCE PRACTICALLY NO CREDIT FOR GENUINE GOOD WILL; THUS ITS RELEGATION TO LAST PLACE ON THE VIRTUE SCALE.

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4. CHINESE IMAGE HAS BEEN STEADILY TARNISHING DURING PAST THREE YEARS. APART FROM A FEW RICE PLANTATION PROJECTS, CHINESE ARE RELATIVELY INACTIVE IN GUINEA. UPCOMING KENG PIAO VISIT IS INTENDED TO RECAPTURE SOME OF THE FORMER WARMTH IN SINO-GUINEAN RELATIONS.

5. COMMENT: TO PUT GABRIEL'S STATEMENTS IN PERSPECTIVE, HE RANKS IN THE LOWER-MIDDLE OF THE MFA HIERARCHY, AND ORGANIZATION WHICH IS ONLY FEEBLY EMPOWERED TO RECOMMEND WHAT GUINEAN POLICY SHOULD BE. IT FUNCTIONS MORE AS A TRANSMISSION BELT IN DISTRIBUTING DIPLOMATIC NOTES AND DESCRIBING GOG POSITIONS. IT DOES NOT COMPARE WELL WITH THE MORE SERIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE STATE COMMITTEES THAT EXERCISE THE REAL AUTHORITY AND OVERSEE THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BILATERAL COOPERATION. GABRIEL IS INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE, HOWEVER, AND SITS IN ON WEEKLY SESSIONS WITH BENGALY DABO, THE MFA'S DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS. GABRIEL IS A RELIABLE SPOKESMAN FOR THE MORE INSTITUTIONALIZED GOG POLICIES. GABRIEL ;832 43FLECT GOG PERCEPTIONS THAT, AMONG THE VARIOUS FOREIGN PRESENCES AND COMPETITION IN AFRICA, MOST OF WHICH ARE SEEN TO FILL A NECESSARY AND VALUED ROLE, THE CUBANS CAN BE

DESCRIBED AS CLOSER TO MISSIONARY STATUS THAN THE
OTHERS. END COMMENT.
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